

## WHAT IS PHILOLOGY? PHILOLOGY AND ITS UTILISATION IN THE STUDY OF LINGUISTIC VARIATION AND CHANGE

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**Abstract.** In this paper, I study the essence of philology from the perspective of the study of linguistic variation and change in old texts by examining: What is philology? What are philological research methods? What makes a study philological – does it suffice that it focuses on an old text? Has philology been defined more based on the research subjects than based on the methods?

I will showcase the status of philology and its significance as a research trend that combines several disciplines. This paper focuses on the traditions of Finnish philology, but it also offers some insight into the essence of philology from a general perspective of the study of languages as the background. The goal is to offer an idea of what the philological research approach has to offer modern research of old texts. Furthermore, I will present a method that I have developed and its benefits in the study of variation and change of old texts. I will also present an analysis of the Finnish noun *varve* ‘pasture’, which Mikael Agricola used in the first handbook for mass in Finnish.

I consider philology to be a sub-discipline of linguistics. It studies and compares old texts with text-critical methods based on their cultural and historical background.

**Keywords:** research methods, textual analysis, Finnish

### 1. Introduction

In the past few decades, philological research has not been favoured much. According to Sheldon Pollock (2009: 933), philology has fallen into disfavour because only a few people understand what the term means. Especially in research that studies the Finnish language, philology has received little attention. My observation about the literature on Finnish language research is that the term *philology* is hardly ever mentioned in connection with studies and research on the Finnish language, even

though it is mentioned often when referring to classical and new languages (see Palola 2015: 230).

In Estonia the role of philology and Estonian philology have been discussed in the context of the question of whether philology even exists anymore (see, for example, Hennoste 2016, Priimägi 2016, Ross 2016, Tamm 2016). This paper aims at answering this question as well.

I have studied the essence, status and content of philology in an article that has been published in Finnish (Palola 2015). After its publication I have had many interesting conversations about the content of my article with other linguists. On the basis of these discussions I have felt it necessary to publish my research also in English, so that people who do not know Finnish could also join in the conversation. At the same time, Finnish philology and philology that studies the Finnish language can partake in international exchange.

In this article I will summarize the essence of philology, its history of practice and research methods, as well as its tradition in the Finnish study of language. Although I repeat myself in this respect, a short summary of my research and thinking is necessary to provide a background for what I wish to emphasize. I will examine the history of philological research as well as its research methods and research traditions particularly from the viewpoint of variation and change of old texts. I study the essence of philology from the perspective of the study of languages by examining: What is philology? What are philological research methods? What makes a study philological? Has philology been defined more based on the research subjects than based on the methods?

I will showcase the status of philology and its significance as a research trend that combines several disciplines. The goal is to offer an idea of what the philological research approach has to offer modern research. Furthermore, I will present a method that I have developed and its benefits in the study of old texts. The aim is to contemplate what one can get out of old texts using philological methods. In the past I have used my method in various contexts, for example, in studying folk poetry and dictionary research. In this article I will compare Bible translations from a lexicological perspective.

In providing background I rely on my previously published material, but in the analysis I grapple with a different issue providing an example from lexicology and lexicography using philological methods.

This paper focuses on the traditions of Finnish philology, but it also offers some insight into the essence of philology from a general perspective of the study of languages as the background. This study differentiates between philology that studies the Finnish language and Finnish philology that refers to the study of other languages. Classical philology can also be deemed to cover any other research of ancient culture, such as literary or historical research (Viljamaa 1980: 97). However, I focus solely on linguistic philological research.

The term *classical philology* refers to the research of ancient languages and literature (Oksala 1980: 77–78). The term *neophilology* usually refers to the study of languages other than the classical ones. Typically, neophilology is considered to cover the research into German, Romance and Slavic languages, but not Nordic philology (Lönnroth 2011: 29, Karlsson 2014: 133–134). Traditional philology has been widely utilised in Finland in the research of the Nordic languages, and

Nordic philology was a subject at the University of Helsinki already in the late 19th century (Heikel 1894: 312–313, 1940: 640–641, 750–752, Karlsson 1997: 82, 2008: 188–189).

The term *philology* has been used in different ways at different times in discussions about the study of languages. At times, it has been interpreted as a term that refers to historical or diachronic linguistics; at other times, the term *philology* has been used to emphasize the link between language and the cultural context. *Philology* has also been considered synonymous with the term *study of languages* or *linguistics*. The differences and the relationship between the terms philology and linguistics have been discussed on several forums (see Aitchison 1990: 11–12, Mańczak 1990: 261, 270, Posner 1990: 337–338, 349, Pollock 2009: 932–934, Adamson, Ayres-Bennet 2011: 201–204).

## 2. Discussion

### 2.1. Classical philology and neophilology

Philological<sup>1</sup> research is considered to have started in India in the fourth century B.C. It was observed at that time that the spoken language had separated from the language of the sacred texts to such an extent that some tools were needed to keep the language of texts understandable without changing their message and essence (Pollock 2009: 936). The basic issue of philology was born. (See Palola 2015: 224)

According to the philological approach, a language cannot be separated from the culture, living conditions or history of the people who use it (Karlsson 1997: 52). The basic structure of ancient philology, according to which philology consists of the research and teaching of language and literature, has been retained throughout the history of classical philology. The philological methods of textual criticism, interpretation and evaluation were coined in Alexandria of Hellenistic Greece when philologists attempted to remove mistakes from old manuscripts. (Oksala 1980: 77, Palola 2015: 225)

Traditional philological methods can be defined as follows: The basic function of traditional philology in research is to provide an academic commentary or explanation of a text, and possibly also a parallel translation of the text, through critical edition and varied interpretation of the text. Philological research consists of two stages. The first stage consists of an analysis of a culturally bound text, and the final result of this stage is a commentary that is often called an edition. A parallel translation is often produced as well. In the second stage, the edited text is processed with a selected linguistic method. (Oksala 1980: 78–79)

A philological-linguistic analysis could be, for instance, an analysis of the vocabulary or phonological or morphological structure of an edited text. In addition to the edition of texts, Finnish philology has focused on the research of the development of lexis and historical syntax, as well as syntax-based research of lexis and expressions (Rissanen 1980: 105–106, see Palola 2015: 225)

In Finland, linguistic research in the fields of both classical philology and neophilology has been fairly abundant. The study of the Greek and Latin languages

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<sup>1</sup> I refer to both classical philology and neophilology as *philology*, unless there is a special need to separate the two. *Traditional philology* may refer to the research traditions of classical philology or neophilology.

by Mikael Agricola and his followers when translating the Bible can be referred to as the earliest instance of philology in Finland. The study of languages became more common once a university was established in Finland: comparisons of words between Finnish and other languages were published, attempts to prove a relationship between Finnish and Hebrew were made and the history of Finns was studied. New languages have been taught and researched in Finland since the late 17th century. (Heikel 1894, Aalto 1971: 11–14, 1980: 13–25, Viljamaa 1980: 97, Hovdhaugen et al. 2000: 69–71, 113, Karlsson, Enkvist 2000: 257–273, Karlsson 2008: 186–187, Riikonen 2014: 8–12, also see Oksala 1980: 89–90 and Palola 2015: 226)

Professorships of Germanic and Romance philology were established at the Turku Academy and the Imperial University of Alexander in the 1890s; a professorship in Swedish language and literature was established in 1876 and a professorship in English philology in 1907. Finnish neophilologists sought to learn about the European philological traditions from the top experts of the field. The European tradition emphasised the methods and principles of text editing. Thus, philology gained a strong foothold in Finland from the 19th century to the mid-20th century. (Rissanen 1980: 105, Aalto 1987: 7–12, Karlsson 1997: 78–79, 2014: 133, Karlsson, Enkvist 2000: 228, Riikonen 2014: 11–17, 33, 205, Karlsson 2008: 187, see Palola 2015: 226)

Finnish philology has strong traditions and an internationally recognised status (Rissanen 1980: 106). Finnish philology is still visible at the international level; the most recent example is an edition of the Salem witch trials published by Cambridge University Press where a large group of Finnish Anglicists were part of the editorial staff (Lönnroth 2011: 28).

The difference between classical philology and neophilology can best be seen in the language being studied. Furthermore, classical philology – unlike neophilology – equally emphasises the research of language and literature (Oksala 1980: 78). Toivo Viljamaa (1980: 99) mentions as another difference between classical philology and neophilology that the linguistic materials in the former are all written, while neophilologists also emphasise the significance of spoken language in philological research. (See also Rissanen 1980: 103, Posner 1990: 337, Riikonen 2014: 205–206, Palola 2015: 226–227)

## 2.2. Philology and linguistics

Views on the status of philology and its relationship with linguistics vary a great deal. The definition of philology and its status have naturally been influenced by changing academic principles, trends in the study of languages, as well as by the linguists themselves: what the term *linguistics* means and what the relationship is between linguistics, the study of languages and philology and their relationship with the rest of the academic world. A thorough review of the history of the study of languages is not possible in an article such as this, nor is it necessary, but some elements that are interesting from the viewpoint of philology should be discussed. (See Palola 2015: 227)

When one places the history of the study of languages in its proper place in the framework of academic research at large, one must note that at first, there was

no linguistics, nor were there any linguists. Instead, the people who first studied languages came from different fields: there were theologians, historians and philosophers, and some were even learned in the law. The underlying interests of their research were not linguistic but theological in most cases; therefore, the early philologists viewed language as a tool rather than a goal unto itself when interpreting the Bible, for example. The current gaps between disciplines did not exist; instead, research in different fields could be conducted. The first language professorships in Finland were in the Faculty of Philosophy together with mathematics and physics, for example. As of the mid-19th century, languages were taught and studied in a historical-linguistic department that was called the Faculty of History and Philology between 1852 and 1863. (Heikel 1940, Nuorteva 2008: 22–31, Palola 2015: 227)

The status of philology and the understanding of its content can be studied from a chronological perspective or in light of the different concepts that prevailed in the different fields. A clear issue that can be seen in the history of the study of languages is that the term *philology* was used before the term *linguistics*. Since its early days and up until the 1840s, the study of languages was commonly referred to as *philology*, linguists were known as *philologists* and any research was called *philological* research, which is what it was in the basic sense of the word: textual criticism and the production of editions. However, very soon the formulation of the first grammars started, people became interested in general questions about the study of languages, and multilingual comparative glossaries that aimed at understanding cognate languages were published (see Karlsson 1997: 5–9, 2008: 186, for example). At first, these studies were also called *philological* studies. (See Palola 2015: 227–228)

The results of historical-comparative linguistics started to spread and become better known in the 1840s. At the same time, the idea of the study of languages, which had been named philology up until then, being separated into two separate fields came into being: the term *linguistics* was coined as a counterpoint to *philology*, and any research that was not traditional philological research was termed linguistic research. This mainly applied to the study of historical phonology and other historical language research. The separation of linguistics from (classical) philology, at least at the conceptual level, did not happen until at the end of the 19th century. (Karlsson 1997: 6–7, 39–40, Adamson, Ayres-Bennet 2011: 201, Palola 2015: 228)

In the 20th century, philology and linguistics were both considered sub-disciplines of the study of languages. In the 1900s, key issues in the study of new languages in Finland included text edition and diachronic linguistics. The relationship between these two was so close that both benefited from each other. The initial base was textual criticism, and the study of the structure of languages started from this. The focus started to shift away from text edition in the late 20th century, however. (Itkonen 1966b: 16–17, 22, Riiho 1980: 113–116, Karlsson 2008: 190–192, 2011: 41, see Palola 2015: 228)

Thus, philology continued to exist. An essential issue is to examine what philology was considered to entail and what it had in common and what was different between philology and other studies of languages, which were known as linguistics. According to Anttila (1975: 145), philology combines linguistics and history. Osmo Ikola's (1982: 225) definition of linguistics was the study of human language from the viewpoint of both the structure of the language and its development and his

definition of philology – in the narrow sense – was the study of works of literature, old ones in particular, from the viewpoint of both the language and the content. (See Palola 2015: 228)

The study of literature and linguistic research have traditionally been included in philology in Belgium, for example, while the term *philology* has meant the study of written language in the United States and Continental Europe. Also in the case of English, the older form of philology focused mostly on phonological changes and written language, but the concept of philological research has since broadened: it is considered synonymous with the term *historical linguistics*, and it aims to raise morphological and syntactic changes to the same level as phonological changes (Aitchison 1990: 11, Defays 1992: 95–101, Adamson, Ayres-Bennet 2011: 201–202). (See Palola 2015: 228–229)

In Estonia the term philology is usually connected with the study of linguistics, literature and folkloristics (see, for example, Hennoste 2016, Priimägi 2016, Ross 2016, Valk 2016). Linnar Priimägi (2016) deals with the connection of philology with many different disciplines while Ülo Valk (2016) ponders Richard Bauman's definition of folkloristics as 'philology of the vernacular' in a very interesting viewpoint.

Helge Jordheim's concept of *new philology*<sup>2</sup> emphasises the significance of philology as a new kind of science of reading and an excellent opportunity for interdisciplinary cooperation between the study of history, literature and language, for instance, but also between the study of the history of Western thought, philosophy and theology, which are all interested in language from their own perspectives. When you study philology as the study of reading, you emphasise texts as the starting point and the relationship between language and history. Philology could thus be an aid in the study of the empirical side of language. (Jordheim 2003: 7–8, 22, Lönnroth 2011: 28–29, Palola 2015: 229)

### 2.3. Philology in the research of the Finnish language

The term *philology* is mentioned only a couple of times in connection with studies and research into the Finnish language (See Palola 2015: 230). Many universities still use the word philology in the names of their departments, such as English, German, or Nordic philology. None of the universities have incorporated the term *philology* in the names of their Finnish language departments. Granted, the University of Helsinki has had two professorships referred to as a *professor of Finnish philology*. There are some well-known researchers of Old Literary Finnish among them and many of them have also used philological methods in their research, but the holders of these posts did not actually focus on research according to the philological traditions (see, for example, Heikel 1940: 756–757, Suutari, Salo 2001, Palola 2015: 231).

Old Finnish texts have naturally been studied. Studies on the history of phonology have been especially popular, but they contain hardly any philological analyses based on the cultural background at the time the text was written<sup>3</sup>. In my mind, such studies are first and foremost linked to historical linguistics. (Palola 2015: 230–232)

<sup>2</sup> The term must be kept separate from neophilology.

<sup>3</sup> As an example of such studies, one could mention *Äännehistoriallinen tutkimus Abraham Kollaniuksen lainsuomennosten kielestä* by Rapola (1925).

Philological methods have, also in recent decades, been used in the research of the Finnish language. There are some examples of philological works attempting to determine the sources and the originality of old texts by comparing the language of the texts and analysing them in relation to the cultural background. Some text editions that comply with the philological traditions and critical editions of old texts have been completed and published (see, for example, Harviainen et al. 1990, Agricola 2007, Häkkinen 2012, 2013, Lauerma 2012, Edith). (Palola 2015: 232–234)

#### **2.4. Potential of philological analysis and its benefits in the study of old texts**

My thesis (Palola 2009) is a philological analysis of the language of the old Finnish Kalevala-metre poems (see SKVR) written down by Christfrid Ganander (1741–1790). The language of poems that were written down in the 18th century proved to be a challenging research subject. Many of the wordings in the research material did not become clear in terms of morphology and meaning until I had thoroughly interpreted the verses by means of philological text analysis. I used extensive folkloristic research data as an aid in my philological analysis, and I noticed how well the study of the culture at the time the text was written opens a path to the interpretation and analysis of the language.

Next, I will present an analysis of the Finnish noun *varve* ‘(metsä)laidun’ (‘pasture’) from a perspective that illustrates the significance of philological text analysis in the study of old texts. Even if this word is Finnish, it cannot be understood by Finnish speakers without explanation.

This word caught my attention in Mikael Agricola’s work *Messu eli Herran Echtolinen* (1549), which is the first handbook for mass in Finnish. It includes a plan and form for officiating a service. The end of the book also features chapters that include the Bible’s Song of Songs 2 of today translated by Agricola (Agricola-corpus, see also Häkkinen 2013: 7–8, 10). Song of Songs is a dialogue in the form of a poem that has been interpreted as an erotic poem between a man and a woman as well as a depiction of love between God and his church. Song of Songs (also known as *Korkea Veisu* lit. ‘Song of Salomon’) has been a part of the Finnish Bible translation since the 1642 Biblia all the way through to the newest Bible (1992). It was first published in Agricola’s book of Mass in (*Messu eli Herran Echtolinen*) 1549. The content in Song of Songs has not really changed in its 450 years. The language has naturally been edited considerably; the old texts have structures and expressions that are foreign to modern language. In particular, the vocabulary differs from the language of today.

Firstly, the main points of the philological method I use:

1. All the linguistic forms that cannot be fully understood without a thorough analysis are taken from the text to be studied.
2. The word *varve* must be interpreted firstly based on the context of the text and the subject matter of the text to fully understand the meaning of the words and the verses surrounding them.
3. What did *varve* mean in the culture in which the text was written? What do the verses in which it can be found mean?

4. Is this word used anywhere else (dialects, cognate languages, traditional poems or archives of Old Literary Finnish)? In which contexts was it used?
5. A philologist must also take into account the possibility of a mistake in spelling or an erroneous generalisation on the part of the author.

The noun *varve* is used in the verses *Cuckaiset ovat putkachtaneet maan päle. Keuät ombi lehestynyt, Ja se Mettisen äni ombi cwltu meide warpeila*. ‘The flowers have sprouted on the ground. Spring has approached. And the voice of a woodpigeon has been heard on our pastures.’ In modern Finnish these verses would sound something like this: *Kukat ovat puhjenneet kukkimaan. Kevät on lähellä ja metsäkyhkyjen ääni kuuluu meidän laitumillamme*. ‘The flowers have bloomed. Spring is close and the voice of woodpigeons can be heard on our pastures.’

To begin my analysis I will present my understanding of the Finnish *varve*-type word stem division of labour and their meanings, so that the reader could better follow the course of my analysis. The rationale for setting up my research in this way will become clearer as the analysis progresses. The division is, of course, rough and at times artificial, as meanings and inflection paradigms have partly overlapped, as is typical in a natural language. According to my current understanding, the texts that I examine contain the following nouns:

1. *varpe* : *varppeat* ‘bulwark’, ‘pole, board’ (SG.NOM : PL.NOM)
2. *varve* : *varpeen* ‘pasture’ (SG.NOM : SG.GEN)

The noun *varve* : *varpeen* ‘pasture’ (SG.NOM : SG.GEN) is my main interest, but I also briefly consider its connection to the noun *varpe* : *varppeat* ‘bulwark’, ‘pole, board’ (SG.NOM : PL.NOM). While I study the meaning and use of the noun *varve*, as well as the possible reason for Agricola using such a rare expression in his translation, I compare Agricola’s verses to other translations of the Bible, in Finnish and other languages that are known to have been used as sources for his translation work (see Heininen 1999, 2000: 3–4): Vulgate’s Latin translation (Vulgata), Kustaa Vasa Bible 1541, Luther Bible (Luther 1541) and Biblia Hebraica (Münster’s Latin translation 1543). I have not been able to obtain physical copies of all of the above and thus rely on the online versions, for which precise information can be found in the list of references. In the Finnish translations (see Biblia 1642, Biblia 1776, Raamattu 1933/38, Raamattu 1992) I focus on the changes in translations and what expressions other translations have used in the case of the noun *varve*. When looking at bibles in other languages, I focus on how they have translated the section in question.

As I search for reasons for Agricola’s translation choices, I study Agricola’s possible source texts. I examine the noun *varve* and the meanings, etymology and contexts it is surrounded by in other old texts.

I examined the verses in Song of Songs 2:12, ‘The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.’ (MEV). They appear in key Finnish Bible translations as follows:

1642	1776	1933/38	1992
12 Cuckaiset owat puhgennet ulos kedolla / kewät on tullut ja toucomettinen cuulu meidän maassam.	12 Kukkaset owat puhjenneet kedolla, kewät on tullut, ja toukomettisen ääni kuuluu meidän maassamme;	12 Kukkaset owat puhjenneet maahan, laulun aika on tullut, ja metsäkyhkyksen ääni kuuluu maassamme.	12 Kukat nousevat maasta, laulun aika on tullut, joka puolella huhuavat metsäkyhkyt.

‘Flowers have bloomed out in the field; spring has come and the woodpigeon is heard in our land.’ (1642)

‘Flowers have bloomed in the field; spring has come and the voice of the woodpigeon can be heard in our land.’ (1776)

‘Flowers have bloomed on the earth, the time for singing has come and the voice of the woodpigeon is heard in our land.’ (1933/38)

‘Flowers sprout from the earth, the time for singing has come; everywhere the woodpigeons are hooting.’ (1992)

The noun *varve* thus does not appear in the Song of Songs in any other Finnish Bible translations. It has not even been included in the first Bible translation (Biblia 1642). In all versions Agricola’s *varpeila* has been replaced by the expression *in our land*. It is also the case in the comparative texts in other languages that the voices of birds are stated to be heard ‘in our land’.

Heininen has discovered something interesting about the term *jalopeurukainen* ‘young lion’, lit. ‘noble deer’, used by Agricola, as it cannot be found in any other translations. As Heininen puts it: “He did not speak Hebrew, Vulgate had *leo*, Luther had the plural *Junglewen*, and *vng Leyon* was used in the domestic text.” In the 1642 translation of the Bible, Agricola’s translation had been replaced with the expression *nuori Lejoni* ‘young lion’ (Heininen 2000: 3–4). The fate of Agricola’s *jalopeurukainen* seems quite similar to that of his *varpeila* form; it was not accepted into other translations.

Heininen found that the archetype for *jalopeurukainen* was *leunculus* in Sebastian Münster’s Latin translation of *Biblia Hebraica* (Heininen 2000: 3–4). My hypothesis was that Münster’s *Biblia Hebraica* would prove to be the source for Agricola’s *laidunmaa* ‘grazing land’, but his translation of the Song of Songs still does not explain Agricola’s expression *varpeila*, as it also uses the expression *in terra nostra* (see *Biblia Hebraica*).

Agricola’s sources therefore do not seem to explain the use of the noun *varve*. It is certainly possible that Agricola had at his disposal a source that we simply know nothing of as yet. This is of course very unlikely, when we know how thoroughly Agricola’s sources have been studied (see Heininen 1999, 2000). Nonetheless, following comprehensive research, these are precisely the questions a philologist can best answer, bringing forth information that could not otherwise be determined. Nevertheless, finding the source remains a challenge for further research.

Although the term *varve* that Agricola used in Song of Songs did not go on to appear in the next Bible translations, it appears in the Book of Joel (1: 19–20) in the 1642 translation (see Biblia 1642). It most likely came from Agricola’s Book of Joel translation in his work *Veisut ja ennustukset* (Agricola-corpora). In the comparative texts, in other words, in the later Finnish translations of the Bible, Swedish and German early translations of the Bible and the Latin Vulgate, the corresponding section talks about animals that cry for help because fire has burned their grazing lands. Here all the translators have presented a united front in using the expression ‘grazing land’; however, the 1642 translation adheres to Agricola’s expression, although later translations have ended up using the more neutral expression *laidun* ‘grazing land’. The difference in the translation of Song of Songs is here: while

Agricola has used the term *varve*, other translators have systematically opted for the expression ‘our land’.

The noun *warpe* : *warppeet* appears both in the Old Literary Finnish and the Early Modern Finnish dictionaries (Renvall 1826, Ahlman 1865, Ganander 1937–1940) but the definitions refer predominantly to (additional/spare) brims, supports or, generally, boards. Juslenius (1745) also gives the form *warwe idem. warwisto*. In Renvall’s dictionary (1826) the noun *varvet* appears as a search term, which seems to connect it to the noun *varpu* ‘low woody-stemmed plant’. Also Lönnrot (1958), in his dictionary, gives the noun *varpi, varven* with the meaning ‘forestland’.

Christfrid Ganander provides in his dictionary, *Nytt Finskt Lexicon* (Ganander 1937–1940), the word *warwikko* as an entry and explains that it is a little forest. He also gives the word *varve* together with the word *warwikko*.

Thus, Ganander mentions the noun *varve* but seems to regard it as a synonym for the noun *varis* ‘crow’. For this I have not found any reason, explanation or support from old texts or literary sources. Therefore it is Ganander’s flawed interpretation. Nonetheless, he too connects the noun *varve* to the woods.

I have searched for the noun *varve* from other texts as well. In Old Literary Finnish texts only a few examples of its use can be found with the meanings ‘pasture, woodland, woods’. Agricola himself uses the expression in his Prayerbook (1544) and in his work *Veisut ja ennustukset* (1551). It was also used by Herra Martti (1580) and Abraham Kollanius (1648) in their translations of Kristofers landslag ‘The Country Law of Christopher’. One occurrence of the noun *varve* can also be found in the 1800s text *Lakeja ja asetuksia*, which defines laws and statutes in Finland. All of the aforementioned texts talk about a field meant for grazing animals (see Agricola-corpus and VKS).

The noun *varve* : *varve(t)* appears in the southwestern dialects and partly in the Southern Ostrobothnia dialect of Finnish with the meanings ‘woodland, pasture, enclosed pasture’ (SMSA). It is natural that Agricola, as a speaker of the southwestern dialects, knew the expression and its meaning. It is interesting why he, contrary to all the other Bible translators, ended up using it instead of ‘our land’. In the Etymological Dictionary of the Finnish Language (SKES), the noun *warpe* and *varve* are presented as synonyms. In the etymological dictionary *Suomen sanojen alkuperä* (SSA), the noun *warpe* is given with the meaning ‘bulwark’ and refers to the noun *varpa* ‘a branch (pruned) from a deciduous tree, twig’. In connection with this, examples from related languages are given: for example the Estonian *varvik* ‘coppice forest’, Northern Veps *varbik* ‘coppice forest, young deciduous forest’, and Lule Sámi *var’pē* (< fi) ‘leaflessness of a forest, the falling of leaves’.

In contrast, in old folk poetry the noun *warpe* : *warppeen* (SG.NOM : SG.GEN) appears with the meaning ‘bulwark’, and, moreover, the noun *varve* : *varpeen* (SG.NOM : SG.GEN) appears in an incantation to protect cows, where it clearly refers to grazing lands (SKVR). Therefore, it seems that although the use and inflection have somewhat overlapped, in older texts they seem to appear separate, as I have outlined. One commonality for the nouns appears to be that they both, in some respect, refer to a tree. I also see a connection to the meaning ‘shelter’; a pasture is in essence also a shelter for cattle. The expression *olla varppeillaan* (in Modern Finnish *olla varuillaan* ‘to be wary’, lit. ‘to be on one’s toes’) has traditionally been linked to the noun *warpe* meaning ‘bulwark’ (Vuorela 1979: 500–501). I imagine

that the origin of the expression could similarly be related to the noun *varve* 'pasture', where the person who is *varuillaan* 'wary', would be protecting their pastures and cattle, which has traditionally been one of the most important belongings and lifeblood of a family.

Furthermore, it is worth pondering why, in his translation of the Song of Songs, Agricola has, differently to other Bible translators, used the expression *laidun* 'pasture' and especially its dialectical word *varpe*. Maybe his intention was to illustrate and enliven the image of the woodpigeon hooting by placing it in the yard of the person hearing it. As such, Agricola's depiction is more accurate, at least from the perspective of the Finnish seasonal cycle; woodpigeons hooting in the fields signals the approaching spring.

It is also an interesting fact that in the Finnish literal depictions the noun *varve* 'pasture' has been given little attention, although its existence is irrefutably proven by old folk poetry, dialects and old texts. For example, it appears in the folk poetry that was used as the basis for Lönnrot's Kalevala, but it is not acknowledged in Kalevala dictionaries (see. i.e. Turunen 1949, Ruoppila 1967); the noun *varpe* 'bulwark', on the other hand, has been included in dictionaries that explain the Kalevala.

### 3. Reasoning and summary

In this article, I have shed some light on the history of philological research and the discussion on and current status of philology, and contemplated the relationship between philology and linguistics, and their relationship with research of variation and change. As a summary, I can state that the term *philology* has been used and is still used in a very heterogeneous manner in linguistic discussion. In this chapter, I offer some of my comments on philological research and its status, as well as some ideas on the future of philology in current and future research of variation and change.

It is my opinion that in many contexts the term *philology* is sort of a remnant from the history of the study of languages. Originally, the study of languages was known as *philology*. The term *linguistics* became necessary when the methods of the study of language became more varied and experienced a major change. Due to this turmoil, the traditional study of languages – which is now only one part of linguistics – continued to exist under the term of *philology*, while the new term *linguistics* meant the modern study of languages at the time. At present, *linguistics* must thus be considered a synonym to the term *study of languages*, which means that it is a superordinate concept to both *philology* and the other subsectors of linguistics. (Palola 2015: 237)

As I define my own philological research below, I do it from my own viewpoint: I base it on my own studies, observations and experiences. My goal is not to define the concept of *philology* in an exhaustive manner that includes all of its essence and content.

I am not in favour of a strict drawing of a line between what philology is and is not, but I do have some criteria that a study should meet, in my opinion, in order to be called a philological study. I assess these criteria based on the research subject, research materials, research questions and research methods. I study the research

subject and materials together because they are most often the same in a philological study. This is not always the case, however: the research subject may be a phonological or morphological detail that is studied from old texts, for instance. In such a case, the old texts are the research materials, but they can also be considered the research subject in a broader sense. (Palola 2015: 237)

I consider philology to be a sub-discipline of linguistics. It studies and compares old texts with text-critical methods based on their cultural and historical background. As Priimägi (2016: 584) defines: philology studies the relations between text and reality. The study of the culture at the time the text was written opens a path to the interpretation and analysis of the language. Just as sociolinguistics focuses on language through society, philology focuses on language through the culture at the time the text was written. (Palola 2015: 237)

According to Harry Lönnroth (2011: 28), philology need not be limited to old texts. I agree, but why should philology not be classified as a discipline that focuses on the study of old texts? Not to deviate into discourse analysis or any other tools of modern textual research, I just state that there are separate terms and separate methods for the study of modern texts. I look at philological research as a whole: if the research subject is modern language, how can the other criteria of philology – studying the text based on the culture and history, and the text-critical methods – be met? The same applies to the study of spoken language. This does not mean that philology cannot deal with spoken language or modern texts: an interpretation of a text based on the culture could be necessary when analysing the language of local newspapers and interpreting them into standard language, for example. (Palola 2015: 238)

A philologist can pose a variety of research questions, but the starting point, which Matti Rissanen (1980: 103) also points out, is that philological research always emphasises the historical viewpoint. As Lönnroth (2011: 26) also states, when interpreting old texts, a key issue is understanding that the text being studied is an indication of a time that is not the same as our time (see also Jordheim 2003: 17). A philologist studies texts based on both the language and the content (Itkonen 1966b: 22) and emphasises the fact that language is a tool in communication between people, which is why a philological study naturally entails an interest towards the users' educational, social and political backgrounds (Rissanen 1980: 103). That is why a philological study must always involve studying the text in its cultural and historical context: what the text and the units in it (words and expressions) meant at the time, what the culture was like at the time the text was written, what the text itself reveals, what the variation, structures and words in the text reveal to the researcher and what the overall significance of the text is. A philologist cannot separate him/herself from such basic questions of the discipline. (Palola 2015: 238–239)

It seems that in the literature about the Finnish language in the past few decades, the term *philology* is most often linked to the study of Old Literary Finnish even if traditional philological methods were not used. Studies that only meet one of the key criteria of philology, i.e. where the research subject is old (written) language, have been termed philology in Finland. In my opinion, this is the reason why the use of the term *philology* gradually waned and ultimately almost completely disappeared from the vocabulary of Finnish language researchers. (Palola 2015: 239)

In my opinion, philology cannot be defined merely based on the research subject or materials; instead, it must be determined also based on the methods and goals. The *study of Old Literary Finnish* and *philology* should not be considered synonyms. The study of Old Literary Finnish is a discipline that is defined based on the research material, but the research methods and goals may vary a great deal. In my opinion, a philological study must include the following, at least on some level: an old text, an interpretation based on the culture and history, and text-critical methods. (Palola 2015: 240)

Philology has the most in common with historical linguistics where old texts are used as the research materials. There is a major difference between these disciplines, however: textual criticism. Philology and sociolinguistics are close to each other in the sense that both emphasise the links between language, society and culture. I see philology as an opportunity for interdisciplinary cooperation. I concur with the view of many philologists (such as Riiho 1980: 115–116, Adamson, Ayres-Bennet 2011: 202, Lönnroth 2011: 28, see also Hennoste 2016) that many modern disciplines could benefit from philological study of the language. Lönnroth (2011: 28) points out that philology has something to offer particularly in cases where boundaries between disciplines and languages disappear and where a unifying approach to studying texts is needed. (Palola 2015: 240)

Philology in its most profound sense has been overlooked in the study of the Finnish language even though the study of Old Literary Finnish has been abundant. Some critical editions, text comparisons and analyses according to the philological tradition have been published. However, culture-bound philological research has been fairly limited when taking into account the volume of research, which partially explains why it is so difficult to define and why the definitions are so varied. (Palola 2015: 240)

Why have there not been more studies compliant with the philological traditions (as defined in this article) in Finland? Probably partly because the study of the Finnish language is a young discipline and Neogrammar has had a strong position in Finnish linguistics<sup>4</sup>. Philology did not quite have time to root itself in the study of the Finnish language before the emergence of Neogrammar and all the other linguistic disciplines. (See Itkonen 1966a: 215, Palola 2015: 240)

It is a fact that if one only wishes to study historical language, it can only be studied by using old texts. Philological methods are necessary when one wishes to compare the structure of historical language and modern language. When interpreting an old text and its variation and change, one must take into account the possibility that there may be spelling errors, copying errors or interpretation mistakes by the scribe in the text. Blind trust in a linguistic theory may produce wordings for whose existence the studied manuscript does not provide any proof (Ahlqvist 1990: 8). Also, blind trust in the evidence provided by the manuscript without taking into account the generally approved results of linguistic research may produce peculiar wordings for which there is no justification in the history of the language regardless of the single instance. Studying such instances is the bread and butter of a philologist. (Palola 2015: 241)

When the philologist is able to reach the origins of a text, he or she will be able to understand it better, reveal errors in previous research or even prove that a wording

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<sup>4</sup> On the research tradition in Finnish, see, for instance, Itkonen 1966b: 34–35, 42, Räisänen 1980: 43–44, 49–52, Siro 1980: 3, Karlsson 1997: 7, 32, 40, 2008: 186–192, Karlsson, Enkvist 2000: 246; Häkkinen 2008.

that has been thought an error in spelling is actually a linguistic mammoth bone. Philological research has had and still has something to offer to the study of the Finnish language by studying the oldest texts. Not all the available information of the Finnish language may be obtained without sufficiently thorough philology, i.e. without going to the source to study and compare the oldest texts. (Palola 2015: 242) As an example of this I provide the way I myself applied a traditional philological method, an analysis, to the study of the noun *varve*.

The method I used allowed me to create new information on the lexicon of the Finnish language and its history. In my analysis I examined Agricola's translation works and his source texts. I found meaning behind Agricola's strange expression and I studied the possible motivation for its use. My analysis proved, for example, that the peculiar-seeming noun in Agricola's texts is nevertheless semantically justified and genuine. I examined this archaic expression from the viewpoint of its occurrence, meaning, etymology and its migration from one source to another. A philological analysis can reach such archaistic materials that could not be reliably studied using any other methods.

A philological method allows the researcher to get closer to the authors and scribes of texts from hundreds of years ago and reveal something about their ideas about the language that could not be reached with any other methods. A philological analysis allows the researcher to determine the routes of words and phenomena, how they travel from one author to the next and from one work to the next, which is also proven by the example analysis. As I also state in my doctoral thesis (Palola 2009), peculiar language forms could become part of dictionaries and grammars due to a marking made by one scribe, which may distort the idea of their significance and commonness. A philological analysis allows the researcher to understand the world of old texts, and language in general, in a versatile manner. Marek Tamm (2016: 719) sums up the essentials: we seem, time and time again, to return to philology, which will forever return, as a ghost or hero.

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## MIS ON FILOLOOGIA? FILOLOOGIAST JA SELLE KASUTAMISEST KEELE VARIEERUMISE JA MUUTUMISE UURIMISEL

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Oulu Ülikool

Vaatlen artiklis filoloogia olemust vanade tekstide keele varieerumise ja muutumise vaatenurgast. Uurimisküsimused on järgmised: mis on filoloogia, millised on filoloogilised uurimismeetodid, mis teeb uurimuse filoloogiliseks – kas piisab sellest, et see tegeleb vanade tekstidega; kas filoloogiat määratletakse pigem uurimisteede kui meetodite põhjal?

Tutvustan filoloogia seisundit ja olulisust mitut eriala ühendava uurimusena. Artikkel keskendub Soome filoloogiale, kuid annab ülevaate ka filoloogia olemusest üldisemalt. Eesmärgiks on näidata, mida on filoloogilisel lähenemisel pakkuda vanade tekstide tänapäevasele uurimisele. Tutvustan ka meetodit, mille olen välja töötanud vanade tekstide varieerumise ja muutumise uurimisel, selgitades Mikael Agricola kasutatud sõna *varve* '(metsa) karjamaa' tausta, esinemist ja tähendust.

Pean filoloogiat keeleteaduse osaks. Selles uuritakse ja võrreldakse vanu tekste tekstikriitiliste meetoditega, lähtudes nende kultuurilisest ja ajaloolisest taustast.

**Võtmesõnad:** filoloogia, fennistika, lingvistiline uurimistradistioon, tekstianalüüs, soome keel

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